

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:20
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2000
SAFEGUARDING THE INTEREST OF INDIAN FARMERS
GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have constituted a four member Task Force to assess the impact of WTO on Indian agriculture and to suggest measures to safeguard the interest of Indian Farmers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the time by which the Task Force is likely to submit its report to the Government; and
- (d) the other steps taken by Government to safeguard the interest of the farmers in this context?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO 20 TO BE ANSWERED ON 20TH NOVEMBER, 2000 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) to (c): A High Level Task Force on Agriculture has been constituted with the following members:-

- (i) Shri Sharad Joshi, Chairman, Shetkari Sanghatana - Chairman
- (ii) Shri P.P. Prabhu, Former Secretary (Commerce), Government - Member of India
- (iii) Prof. Abhijit Sen, Economist, Presently Chairman, Commission - Member for Agriculture Costs and Prices
- (iv) Shri R.C.A. Jain, Addl. Secretary, Department of - Member-Secretary Agriculture and Cooperation

The terms of reference of the Task Force are;

- (a) To assess the impact of WTO commitments on Indian agriculture and to suggest steps to safeguard the interests of the sector, while exploiting the opportunities presented by this treaty;
- (b) To make recommendations to integrate the use of information technology and other emerging technologies in the agricultural sector;
- (c) To make recommendations for effective risk management in agriculture including in production systems, insurance, price mechanisms, future trading, etc; and
- (d) Any other matter referred to it by the Government.

The Task Force is expected to submit its report by February, 2001.

(d): In order to formulate India's negotiating proposals on the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) under the WTO, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, jointly with the Ministry of Commerce, organised three regional Consultations on the AoA with the representatives of State Governments, Farmers' organisations, NGOs and experts at Ahmedabad on 31st January at Calcutta on 27th March and at Cochin on 7th April, 2000. A National Seminar was also organised at IIFT, New Delhi on 10th June, 2000. It was followed by two meetings taken by the Union Agriculture Minister with leaders of Political Parties, Farmers' Representatives and Voluntary Organisations on the 13th September and with State Ministers for Agriculture and Food on 14th September, 2000. On the basis of inputs and advice received during these consultations and meetings, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has prepared negotiating proposals in the interest of the country on the following issues:

(i) Market Access

(ii) Domestic Support

(iii) Export Competition

(iv) Food Security.